

PROMISING PRACTICE

PARTNERSHIP

Cankdeska Cikana Community College - Next Steps II Program



FORT TOTTEN, ND



Tribal college's HPOG program success guides statewide diversity initiatives in North Dakota

With funding from a Health Professions Opportunity Grant (HPOG), Cankdeska Cikana Community College's Next Steps II Program is now in its eighth year of providing training for healthcare occupations, advancing the diversity of the nursing workforce in North Dakota, and addressing critical healthcare workforce needs throughout the state.

The Next Steps II Program's successes recently caught the attention of the Governor of North Dakota, who established a Nursing Diversity Subcommittee. The committee was tasked with studying barriers to employment in the healthcare profession, specifically among Native Americans, New Americans, and other minorities.

Among the committee's findings were that minority groups are largely underrepresented in North Dakota's nursing workforce. Less than 9% of Licensed Practical Nurses (LPNs) and 8% of Registered Nurses (RNs) in the state claim minority backgrounds. Furthermore, over the past six years, the state imported more RNs than were produced through nursing programs in North Dakota. Committee recommendations included adding special pools for minority groups within the state's proposed nurse loan repayment and faculty tuition support programs. Additionally, they proposed a statewide Diversity Mentoring and Tuition Support program to provide minority nursing students with mentors, tutors, and additional training.

To better prepare minority students for success in healthcare training programs, the group investigated barriers to good study habits. The committee is in the process of considering several recommendations

with the potential to improve career outcomes by addressing issues that affect students before they ever enroll in a training program. Among those recommendations are increasing educational support in tribal high schools to strengthen basic reading, writing and math skills; developing a Native American nursing scholarship program; providing state funding for tribal colleges; and leveraging federal funding to match nursing program grants.

Future efforts include investigating the pay equity of nursing faculty at tribal colleges, examining the possibility of applying for a network development grant, and developing a registered healthcare apprenticeship program in the state.

Working with the North Dakota Center for Nursing has heightened the visibility and credibility of the Next Steps II Program as an effective model for addressing healthcare workforce needs in the state. This increased attention has brought awareness to high-level policy makers of the issues that minorities in healthcare face and has helped advance the organization's efforts to improve workforce diversity statewide.

"Partnering with the North Dakota Center for Nursing provides us with visibility and credibility as an effective model for addressing healthcare workforce needs in the state."

– Larry Anderson, Next Steps II Job Placement Specialist

This Promising Practice was self-identified by the grantee and information contained in this document was provided by the grantee.